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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - MIDDLE EAST - IRAQ - RUMSFELD
TO BAGHDAD - LEBANON EU CONSTITUTION
PARIS - FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. MIDDLE EAST - IRAQ - RUMSFELD TO BAGHDAD - LEBANON
- [1](#)2. EU CONSTITUTION

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

TODAY'S MAJOR FRONT-PAGE STORY FOLLOWS PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S
TELEVISED APPEAL LAST NIGHT IN FAVOR OF THE EUROPEAN
CONSTITUTION. ALTHOUGH HIS COMMENT ABOUT IT BEING IN THE U.S.
INTEREST TO STOP EUROPE'S CONSTRUCTION IS BEING REPORTED IN
THE FINANCIAL TIMES, IT GOES UN-REMARKED IN THE FRENCH PRESS.
FOR LE FIGARO, IT WAS "A DIFFICULT APPEAL" WHILE POPULAR LE
PARISIEN TITLES: "CHIRAC SWIMMING UPSTREAM." FINANCIAL LA
TRIBUNE QUOTES THE PRESIDENT IN ITS HEADLINE: "DO NOT BE
AFRAID OF THE CONSTITUTION." COMMENTATORS NOTE THE PRESIDENT'S
CHOICE OF WORDS, A DIRECT QUOTE FROM THE POPE'S ADDRESS, "DO
NOT BE AFRAID," TO THE POLISH PEOPLE. LEFT-OF-CENTER
LIBERATION SPEAKS OF PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S "EVENING CLASS," WHILE
NICOLAS BEYTOUT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO TITLES HIS
EDITORIAL "A MISSED OPPORTUNITY." (SEE PART C)

TODAY'S SECOND MAJOR STORY MARKS THE 100TH DAY OF DETENTION
FOR FRENCH JOURNALIST FLORENCE AUBENAS AND HER DRIVER-
INTERPRETER HUSSEIN HANOUN. THE MEDIA IS DEVOTING WIDESPREAD
COVERAGE TO THE COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER
LIBERATION, THE EMPLOYER OF AUBENAS, THE HEADLINE READS: "ONE
HUNDRED DAYS WITHOUT THEM." COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE HEADLINES:
"FREE THEM!" AND DEVOTES A TWO-PAGE SPREAD OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM
IRAQ AS A MEMORIAL TO THE DETAINED JOURNALIST. THESE
PHOTOGRAPH FROM INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED REPORTERS DEPICT
HARSH MOMENTS OF IRAQ'S RECENT PAST, INCLUDING THE LIBERATION
OF PRISONERS FROM ABU GHARAIB. CATHOLIC LA CROIX'S EDITORIAL
IS SIMPLY TITLED: "FOR FLORENCE."

CATHOLIC LA CROIX, WHICH DID NOT SEND A REPORTER TO THE
AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL PRESS BRIEFING ON APRIL, 12, NONETHELESS
REPORTS ON AMBASSADOR LEACH'S TENURE IN PARIS "WHEN THE
TENSION BETWEEN PARIS AND WASHINGTON WAS AT ITS WORSE." BUT
GILLES BIASSETTE CONCLUDES ON A POSITIVE NOTE: "TENSION
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAS SUBSIDED AND HOWARD LEACH CAN
LEAVE ON A POSITIVE NOTE."

RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO CARRIES AN "OPEN LETTER TO A FRENCH
FRIEND" BY HEZBOLLAH LEADER HASSAN NASRALLAH, SIMILAR TO A
PREVIOUS LETTER ALREADY PUBLISHED IN A LEBANESE PAPER.
NASRALLAH WRITES ABOUT UN RESOLUTION 1559, "A COMPROMISE BY
THE FRENCH WITH THE AMERICANS" TO "IMPROVE THEIR BILATERAL
RELATIONS." (SEE PART C)

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ IS ANALYZED IN POPULAR FRANCE SOIR BY
THOMAS DE ROCHECHOUART, IN A REPORT TITLED: "IRAQ: THE
AMERICAN IMPASSE." (SEE PART C) DE ROCHECHOUART INTERVIEWS
PASCAL BONIFACE, DIRECTOR OF IRIS, (INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC RELATIONS) ON WHAT HE INTERPRETS
AS THE "RISKS OF A FOURTH WORLD WAR." "THE FOURTH WORLD WAR IS
THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO IN WHICH THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS
DRAGGING US, WITH A POLICY BASED ON A FALSE DIAGNOSIS. THE WAR
ON TERROR IS DANGEROUS. BECAUSE IT NEVER ENDS. AND LIKE
PYROMANIAC FIREFIGHTERS, BUSH AND HIS TEAM ARE FEEDING THE
FIRES OF TERRORISM, WHICH IN TURN FEED THEIR OWN POLICY.
ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT BUSH SAYS HE IS NOT THE ENEMY OF THE MUSLIM
WORLD, THAT IS HOW HE IS PERCEIVED. TO FIGHT TERRORISM ONE
MUST UNDERSTAND ITS ROOT CAUSES. THE ROOT OF THE HOSTILITY
TOWARDS THE WEST IS NOT POVERTY, BUT THE FEELING OF INJUSTICE
TIED TO A FEELING OF BEING MISUNDERSTOOD. THERE IS NOTHING
WRONG WITH SPREADING DEMOCRACY, BUT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION
DOES THIS WHILE IT CLOSES ITS EYES TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE BY
CERTAIN REGIMES, LIKE LIBYA. ONE CANNOT PROMOTE FREEDOM WHILE
ORGANIZING GUANTANAMO AND ABU GHARAIB. PRESIDENT BUSH CAN
PRESENT HIS POLICY AS A BATTLE FOR FREEDOM, BUT MEANWHILE THE
ARAB MEDIA SHOW THEIR OWN IMAGES. THAT BUILD ARAB PUBLIC
OPINION."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

MIDDLE EAST - IRAQ - RUMSFELD TO BAGHDAD - LEBANON

"IRAQ, THE AMERICAN IMPASSE"

THOMAS DE ROCHECHOUART IN POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (04/15): "IN SPITE OF THE NEW POLITICAL PROCESS IN IRAQ, VIOLENCE IS NOT WANING, ON THE CONTRARY. WORSE EVEN THAN THE TWO ATTACKS YESTERDAY BY ZARQAWI'S GROUP, IN THE EYES OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION THERE IS THE KIDNAPPING OF JEFFREY AKE AND THE VIDEO BROADCAST BY AL-JAZIRA. AMERICA IS REDISCOVERING THE ANXIETY OF HOSTAGE-TAKING, JUST WHEN THE AMERICANS FIND THEMSELVES INCREASINGLY ALONE IN IRAQ. AFTER POLAND, GREAT BRITAIN, THROUGH ITS FM, INTIMATED YESTERDAY THAT THE BRITISH COULD BE LEAVING IRAQ NEXT YEAR. DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BAGHDAD DEFENSE SECRETARY RUMSFELD REITERATED THERE WAS NO EXIT STRATEGY. 'OUR STRATEGY IS VICTORY.' WHAT IS OF CONCERN IS THAT AMERICA'S STRATEGY IS BASED SOLELY ON THE TRAINING OF IRAQI POLICE. THIS IS A VERY UNCERTAIN POLICY, WHICH COULD TRAP THE AMERICANS INDEFINITELY IN A COUNTRY WHICH IS ON THE BRINK OF EXPLODING."

"OPEN LETTER TO A FRENCH FRIEND"

HEZBOLLAH LEADER HASSAN NASRALLAH IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (04/15): "UN RESOLUTION 1559 WAS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE U.S. TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR COUNTRY. THE FRENCH PART OF THE RESOLUTION ASKED FOR SYRIA'S DEPARTURE. THE AMERICAN PART FOR THE DISARMAMENT OF LEBANESE MILITIA. THIS COMPROMISE HELPED TO BRIDGE THE FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP. BUT FAVORED ISRAEL TO OUR DETRIMENT. WHATEVER OUR OPINION OF THE RESOLUTION. IT IS CLEAR THAT IT HAS CREATED A NEW SITUATION OF DESTABILIZATION FOR LEBANON AND THE REGION."

EU CONSTITUTION

"A MISSED OPPORTUNITY"

NICOLAS BEYTOUT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (04/15): "THE PRESIDENT'S TASK WAS IMMENSE, MAINLY BECAUSE MOST OF THE ARGUMENTS TRADITIONALLY DEVELOPED TO COUNTER THE 'NO' HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROVEN NOT TO WORK. ALSO BECAUSE FOR YEARS, POLITICIANS FROM BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT HAVE PRESENTED EUROPE AS A CONSTRAINT, AND BRUSSELS AS A NEST OF TECHNOCRATS WHO ARE IGNORANT ABOUT NATIONAL REALITIES. IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT MANAGED TO REVERSE THE TREND. HE NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP ARGUMENTS OTHER THAN TO REASSURE HIS AUDIENCE THAT EUROPE WOULD NOT BE ULTRA-LIBERAL, THAT IT WOULD PROTECT US FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON MODEL AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID. THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WILL SHOW WHETHER THE CAMPAIGN HAS TAKEN A NEW TURN OR WHETHER THE OPPORTUNITY WAS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY." LEACH